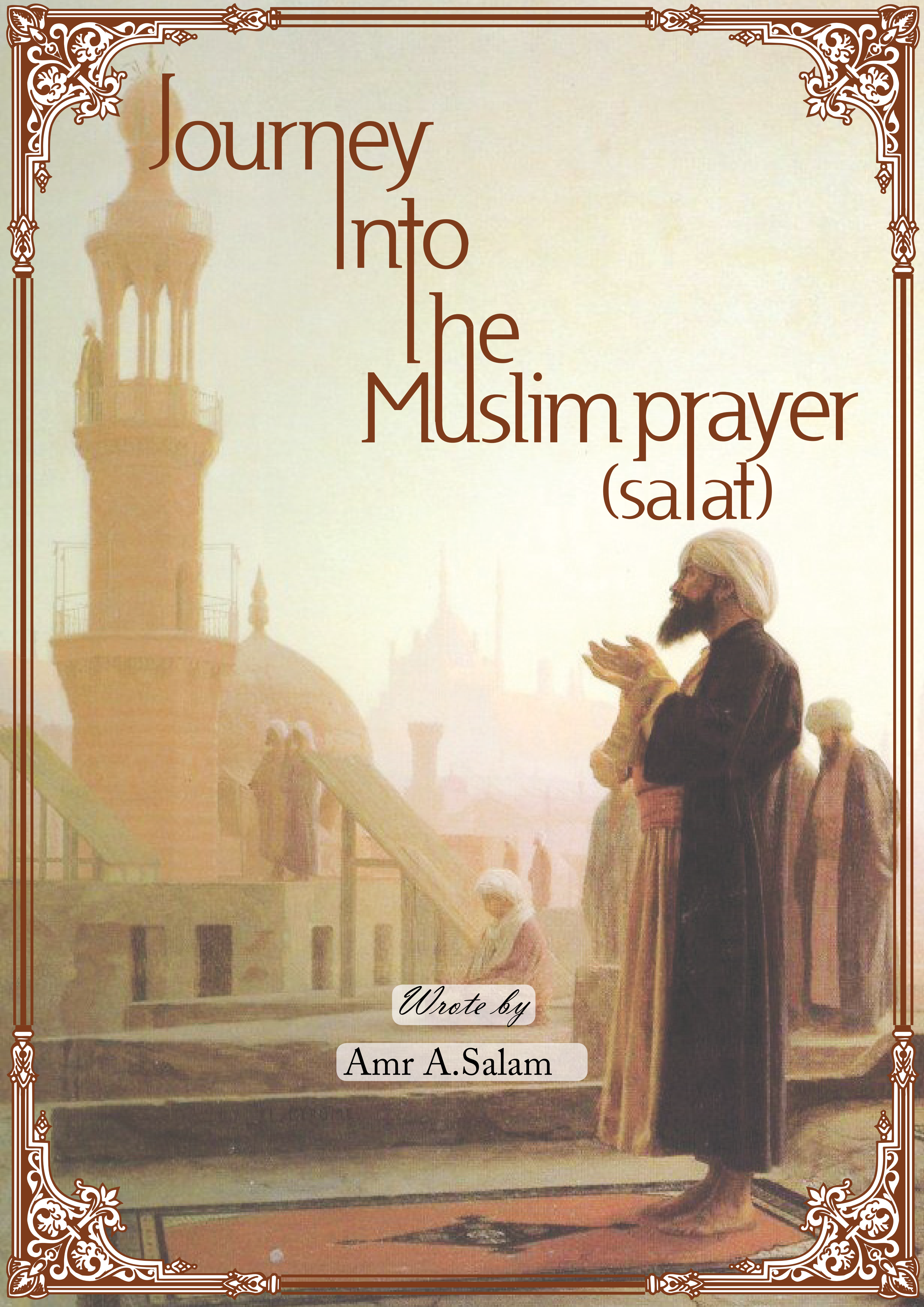
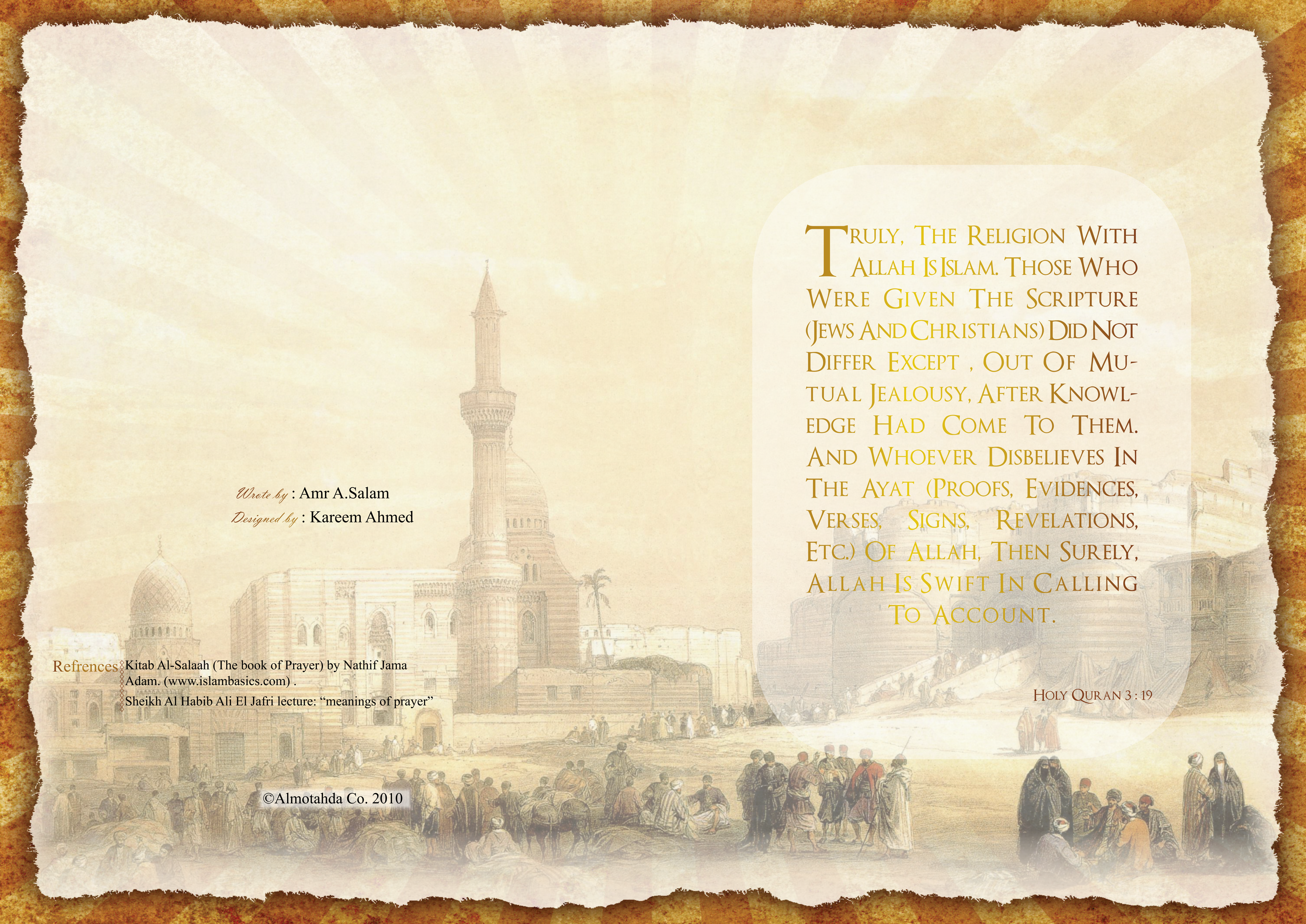


Journey Into The Muslim prayer (salat)

Wrote by

Amr A.Salam



TRULY, THE RELIGION WITH ALLAH IS ISLAM. THOSE WHO WERE GIVEN THE SCRIPTURE (JEWS AND CHRISTIANS) DID NOT DIFFER EXCEPT , OUT OF MUTUAL JEALOUSY, AFTER KNOWLEDGE HAD COME TO THEM. AND WHOEVER DISBELIEVES IN THE AYAT (PROOFS, EVIDENCES, VERSES, SIGNS, REVELATIONS, ETC.) OF ALLAH, THEN SURELY, ALLAH IS SWIFT IN CALLING TO ACCOUNT.

HOLY QURAN 3 : 19

Wrote by : Amr A.Salam

Designed by : Kareem Ahmed

Refrences

Kitab Al-Salaah (The book of Prayer) by Nathif Jama Adam. (www.islambasics.com) .

Sheikh Al Habib Ali El Jafri lecture: “meanings of prayer”

Introduction

The Muslim prayer is a combined series of actions of body and soul in the same time, In order to obtain the perfect way in prayer , your body & soul must be in harmony , so that you may obtain the inner peace inside you plus the please of God upon you....this is what we will be discussing through this subject....a journey in the Salat , and see how the close ones - to God - perform it in order to reach the highest altitude of self and soul in the end of this wonderful experience....

We begin with this Holy verse of Quran in which God says : " And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)." Qur'an 51:56 This means that Salat is the main purpose of creation, and without it ...your surrender to God (i.e Islam) isn't completed with the obedience to that order...



Verse ((al kursi))

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says:" The first thing that the servant of Allah will be called to account for on the Day of Judgment will be the prayer; and if it was good the person's deeds will have been all good, but if it was bad, the person's deeds will have been bad" (Reported by Imam Bukhari).

Prayer purifies the soul, refines the character and inculcates in man the excellent virtues of truthfulness, honesty and modesty. It keeps one who performs it from falsehood and from all forbidden actions as is categorically confirmed by the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:" Verily, prayer refrains from immorality and evil" (Qur'an 29:45).

How Do You Do It ?

Salat is a timed worship (5 times a day , each is in a specific period of time of the day)...this keeps you in a continuous connection with God .

- FAJR (Dawn) PRAYER: Its time begins at dawn when morning light first appears in the horizon and continues until the sun rises.

- DHUHR (Noon) PRAYER: Its time begins when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky and continues up to the time of Asr Prayer.

- ASR (Afternoon) PRAYER: Its time begins when the shadow of an object is equal to its own length, plus the length of its noontime shadow and continues until sunset.

- MAGHRIB (Sunset) PRAYER: Its time starts from sunset and continues until the end of twilight. Twilight is the redness which remains in the horizon after sunset.

- ISHA (Evening) PRAYER: Its time starts when the twilight disappears and continues up to mid-night. Mid-night in this case may not necessarily be interpreted to mean 12:00 o'clock but may be construed as the mid-time between sunset and the appearance of the true dawn. (N.B : these were the methods used to observe the time of Salat , but now , they're all calculated astronomically and provided in calendar for all Muslims across the world) .

Wudu'

• First, know that you are about to meet your GOD & to talk to Him , prepare for that... psychologically and bodily , you have to be clean in body & clothes from kinds of dirt.....

• Clean your body by Wudu' (ablution : washing face & limbs in a serial order) for the minor events (such as after going to toilet) or by Ghusl (washing your whole body with water) if u have had a discharge or an intercourse before that. As the Prophet (peace be upon him), said:" Prayer without ablution is invalid"(Reported by Imam Muslim) .

• Much virtue is attached to Wudu' which is properly performed as can be noted from the following saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): " A person who performs Wudu' properly will have his sins removed from his body, so much that the sins are removed even from underneath his nails" (Reported by Imam Muslim).

• the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said:" If anyone performs the Wudu' completely and then says, I testify that there is no god but Allah alone, He has no partner: and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and may enter by whichever of the gates he wishes" (Related by Imam Muslim).

Performance Of Wudu '

• Rinsing the mouth with water and Sniffing of water in and out of the nostrils (thrice) then washing the entire face (thrice).

• Washing each arm once (right then left).

• Wiping the entire head once and passing of water outside and inside of the earlobes (right then left).

• Washing the feet up to the ankles (right then left).

• Ensuring that the above 4 acts are performed in the given sequence.

• Performing the Wudu' acts continuously and without unnecessary let-ups until completion.)

Performance Of Salat

• **Face** the direction of Mecca with your whole body wherever you are , this is the place of the Holy land around Ka'aba …that's the direction all Muslims face, and that's the place that makes the center of the world (when you put the continents all together Mecca would be the point of center….this is a fact !).



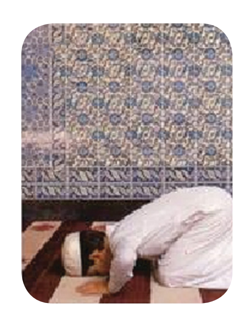


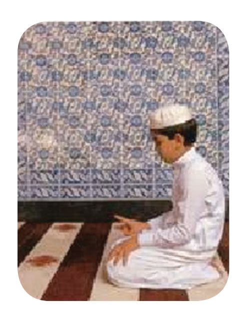
• **All** the land is a mosque , that what the prophet (pbuh) said , so you can pray everywhere but make sure you have some carpet you are putting on the ground for your head…

• **After** mentioning the readiness to enter to pray to the moment of entry into prayer, we sense in our hearts the meaning of access to the presence of God, when you raise your hands backwards, u threw off anything else behind your back and u say (in Arabic) : "Allahu Akbar" meaning : God is the greatest



• **Now** you are in another universe than where u were before , now you left your sorrow and grief behind, u left even yourself for God , to think about nothing except His glory, to be with Him for that He's with you !





• **You** start with reading surat Al Fatiha (the 1st chapter in quran) in Arabic too , when u do… the dialogue between u and God is started !

• **The Dialogue :** when you say (in Arabic but the following is a translation to the chapter) : "In the Name of God , the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. * All the praises and thanks be to Allâh the Lord of the worlds…………… then Almighty God says : (My servant thanked me) He answers your words immediately ! …………., if u said " The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. " Allah says : (My servant praised me), if you say : "the owner of the Day of Judgment"……. Allah Almighty says: (my servant glorified Me), see how the creator of heavens & earth hears you and replies to you ! and who are you to have such treatment by Him , while u can be pushed from the doors of humans (like if you want to meet the governor or even the president , can u receive such treatment from them !), praise be to God the king of kings ! .Who are you and me to be so much, but the Grace of Allah honoring you and your knowledge of Him, how to disappoint Him as he commends you with the prayer !. also when you say: "You (Alone) we worship…" u felt - in the word "Alone"- a strong push means His unification in your heart , the glorious Almighty before there is an existence …..as you say : "… and You (Alone) we ask for help" you feel yourself rising upon everything , u need no one but Him , u seek no one but Him , and He is all your support in this world (and how powerful is such support !) …….the phrase " and You (Alone) we ask for help" means "in everything"….even your help to reach obedience & submission to U in the prayers , in the life & with others , to do the best of that on time and do more……(Imam Harawi –god bless his soul- wrote an entire book called (houses of walkers between "You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help") and it was explained by Imam Hafiz Ibn al-Qayyim –god bless his soul- in another book called (roads of the walkers) in four volumes of this book, it was dealing with the promotions that the Muslim acquires through such journey)…………



back to The Journey . . . .

• As the Muslim stands in front of his Lord saying the 5th verse of Al Fatiha : " You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help…."

• At this moment, Almighty Allah says : (this between me and my servant….and to my servant what he asks for)

• Oh God , how wonderful is your acceptance and mercy , you answer the man instantly as he call on you….whatever he was , while you are in no need of him or anyone of people… and You raise him closer to You more and more as he goes into the journey of Salat till he's in a level of relationship between You and him ! .

• And such relationship isn't like ours , it's a rich one full of bounty and blessings that He keeps giving you whether you ask for it or not, He says : "To each these as well as those We bestow from the Bounties of your Lord. And the Bounties of your Lord can never be forbidden" 17:20

• So you SHOULD NOT miss this GREAT opportunity , and open the door for the wishes ,ask the best wish from Him and He will answer this FOR SURE ! Because He promised this as He said : " ask Me, I will respond to you…." 40:60

• So you need not the lamp of Aladdin to make a wish come true ! just raise your hands to Him at anytime and ask ! , the best is to ask through prayer (this will be discussed in the prostration part)…..

• But now you have a chance to ask something after He has given you His permission , so what will you ask ? Money ? Wife ? Kids ? Health ? What's the best thing to ask for, have you ever thought about this issue before?

• For the money it can be spent in days , the wife and kids doesn't guarantee the life to be happy as you want , the health if you have it, you still don't feel happy with it …until u lose it! , so what is THE BEST ?

• Lucky we are , because God didn't leave us in confusion….He told us what is the best to ask , the rest of the chapter Al Fatiha says : " Guide us to the Straight Way * The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace * not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray "

• Asking for the Guidance in life , this is the best to ask for …this should be your all hope in life , because this is all what's left for you after everything goes off …when you find it , u find the everlasting happiness and the complete satisfaction, with this guidance u reach everything you already wish for…moreover , you find your life purposeful ! .

• One of the Sheikhs said once : "look to the prayer, where it's the most sacred moment , the most important meeting you can ever have in life !….Yet, God wants you to remember the good , pious people - those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace- and keep them in your heart as a role model in life "….

• And a question here : "why we describe the good way to Him by saying :" Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace" ? while He (glory to Him) knows everything and needs no explanation ?.....that's because He wants to teach us a lesson , that you cannot reach the Good Way except when you walk on the Good people's footsteps, and when you have them linked to your heart , when you recall them wherever you are….. Follow them in life….even if you saw them not….you'll accompany them in paradise

• (Here's why many people misunderstand the Muslim mind & see it old-fashioned…it's not a matter of following instructions, but it's the power of love !)

• And another lesson is to learn to love & hate for God (means to love somebody for nothing else of this life benefits except the good intentions & the kindness he shows…. and to hate another if he has the contrary)

• Now we know that to achieve the integrity and walk along the Straight Path starts by One of the steps which is finding the good & pious ones in your life and making them your companions along the journey, He says : "And whoever obeys Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad SAW), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allâh has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the steadfast affirmers, the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are" 4:69 .

• And the believer is directed by heart to this companionship and that needs no command , but it's a reminder to the minds so as not to forget or follow the way of (those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray) , He says : " And remind… for verily, the reminding profits the believers" 51:55 .



Islamic art of Shahada : "no God but God (Allah) and Muhammad is his messenger"

Is this all of Surat Al Fatiha ?

• Imam Ali bin Abi Talib –mercy & bless on his soul- said : if i want to fulfill the meaning of Surat Al-Fatiha I'd use seventy camels ; means that words written in the books of the meanings …. would need getting seventy-camels to carry them !

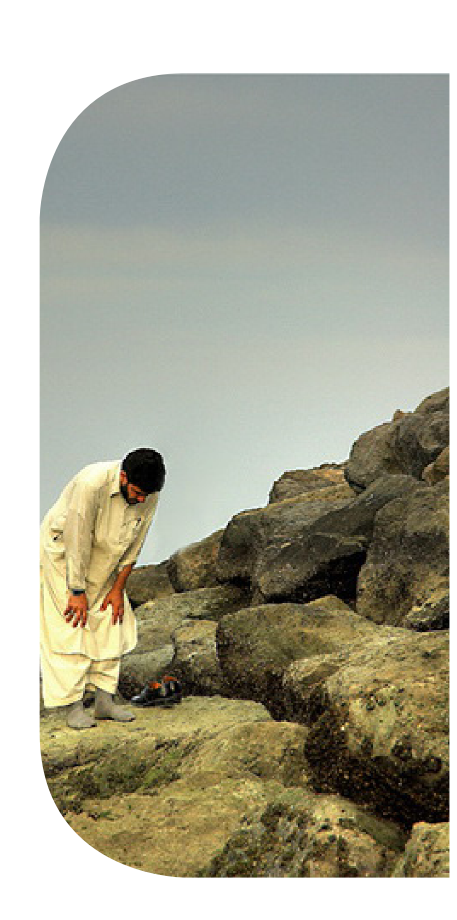
• And don't see this like too much , as those are Allah's words , they carry enormous amount of knowledge beyond them , and those who know Him more gain more of this knowledge , the knowledge He says about :" Say (O Muhammad SAW to mankind). "If the sea were ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished, even if we brought (another sea) like it for its aid." 18 :109 .



• This is the end of Surat (chapter) Al Fatiha which is recited at the beginning of the prayer

• It means "please God answer " , the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says about this :"if anyone of you says Amen at the time the angels in the heavens say the same…that would forgive him his past sins" Muslim .

• And he also said about it : " Jews didn't envy you –Muslims- about something except the way the envy you for the salute (Assalamu-Aleikom) & saying "Amen" " Ibn Majah.







• Then you read what else you can memorize of the Quran (in Arabic) or listen in the presence of the Imam and the heart, then your heart tastes the greatness of God's speech as if He (glory to him) is talking to you ! so how would you listen to such speech ! If you are a lover, how the lover listening would be !? if you want more and more of his guidance , how long your prayer can be !

• Especially when you are standing in congregational prayer , hearing the Imam (leader of the prayer) reciting the holy Quran while you say nothing but paying your full attention to the words that go directly from your ears to your heart, this has another taste that can drop your tears off……Those meanings can turn the hearts of the truthful if they listen to the Holy Quran, this is before bowing …….

Bowing (Ruku)

• The total submission to god (i.e Islam) is all evident throughout the movements the Muslim does in his prayers , so they aren't mysterious at all if you take a deep look to every detail.

• Raise your hands backwards (like in the beginning of prayer) Saying : "Allahu-Akbar" and bowing to lower down your head (i.e. your dignity, your pride, your level whoever you think you are in life) to Him , and only Him who is the most deserving this.If you feel this , then you moved another step nearer to Him (after you spoke the warm dialogue in the standing part) But why He asked us to approach Him while everything in this world is in submission to Him (whether they want or not) ?....this is because His name –one of God's names- is "Al Haqq" means : "The Truth" . so when you are approaching Him you are approaching all the right things in your life more and more , that's why the prayer is a BIG part of His guidance.

• In fact you are weak, you are unable, you are poor in need of God with you (even when you forget / ignore that….there are certain times in life that can make you discover this by yourself !) , thanks God you have this link (the prayer), the more submission you give the more contact with your truth, the more close to your truth… more close to the right the Almighty.

• While bowing u say : " Subhaan rabbial-Azeem" means : Glory to my god the great . this is a spoken testimony to say for three times , then your heart can be awakened to this meaning if you forgot it, if you was lost before it ….now you found your truth. ((it is also advisable to say:" SUBHANAKA ALLAHUMMA WA BIHAMDIKA, ALLAHUMMA EGHFIRLII ", which means " Glory be to Thee, O Allah, and praise be to Thee, forgive me my sins ".))



• When you take your enough time and relief , bring yourself up standing again , raise your hands backwards (again like in the beginning of prayer) and say :“ Sami’a Allahu liman Hamidah” which means “Allah listens to him who praises Him”. AT this moment you have to thank him to get this chance that He listens to your wishes/ supplications , so you say : “ RABBANA WA LAKA AL HAMD” means : “Our Lord, thanks be to Thee “

• there’s a longer form of thanks not obligatory, but the close ones say it : Rabbana Wa Laka Al Hamdu Hamdan Katheer’an Tayyiban Mobarakan Feehiy Mila’s -Samawati Wa Mil’a Alardi Wa Mila’ma Baynahoma Wa Mila’ma Aradta Kma Ynbaghi L- Jalal Wajhika Wa Azeemi Soltanek”

• means : “ Our Lord, thanks be to Thee… lots of thanks , blessed thanks that fills the heavens and earth and what’s between them , fills what You else want, the way that suits sublimity of Your face and greatness of Your majesty”

• This form (or similar to it) was first said by a Bedouin praying behind the prophet (pbuh) once in a congregational prayer , after the prayer was finished , the prophet (pbuh) asked : “who said these words ? “ the man said : “me” , the prophet replied : “ I have seen more than thirty angels racing to write that for you” bukhari …..in another narration , the prophet replied : “the doors of the heavens were opened for that” ibn majah .

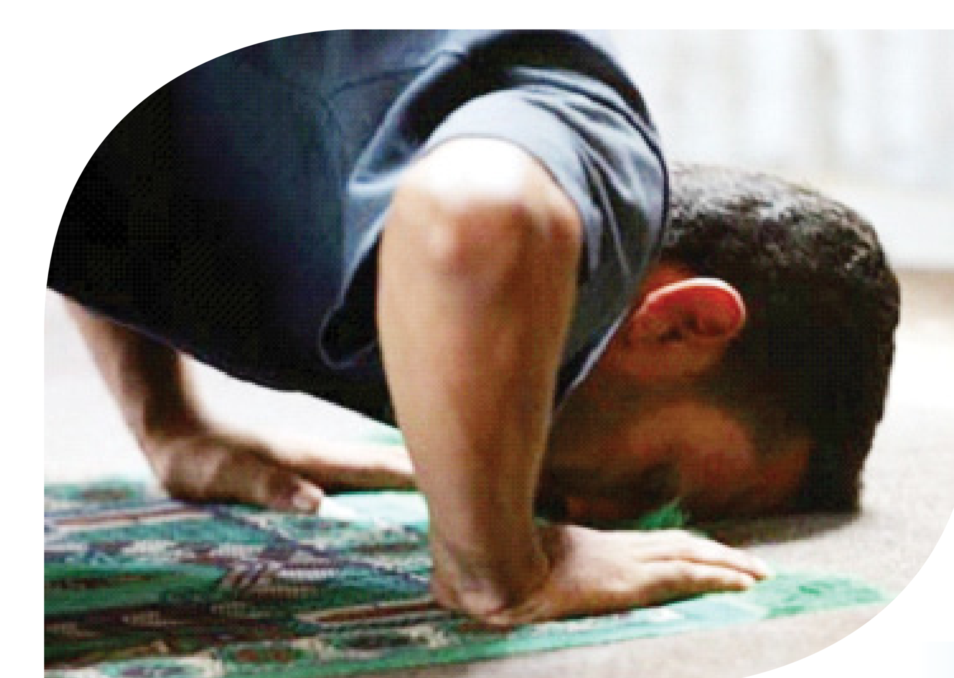
• It was also said in a different narration (imam ibn majah) this way : the angels found it difficult to write (for it deserves a huge reward) so they asked the Almighty God how to write it ? , He glory to him said : “write it like he said until my servant meets me and I reward him with it “ .

• Do you hear this also like that Bedouin who was illiterate?? O learner!! O educated!! O professors!! This Bedouin couldn’t read or write came from the desert, but he had a live present heart inside.



He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good ..” Quran 2:268





•**Allahu-Akbar** , he says before prostration (God is the greatest)

• Falling from standing to submit to him, to be closer …….to admit that you are in need of him, weak, helpless except with Him..

• Touching the ground with the knees first before the hands if possible , placing seven parts of the body on the ground. (These parts are: the forehead together with the nose, both palms of the hands (fingers stretched, closed together and pointed towards the direction of the Kiblah), both knees, toes of both feet ….The arms should be distanced from the body and raised up from the ground)

• This is the most sensitive moment in the prayer , the moment one feels he returns, with the good deeds with him, the moment you feel you are a Muslim….praying to One God and surrendering to Only Him , no one else you should ever prostrate to him except the almighty God.

• During the prostration, the Muslim says for three times at least : “SUBHANA RABBIYAL AALA”, which means “Glorified is my Lord the Exalted”.

• While you are in prostration, it is recommended that you recite as many supplications as possible asking Allah for prosperity both in this worldly life and in the life hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:” When performing Rukuu (Bowing) , glorify Allah, but during prostration, endeavor to make as many supplications as possible to Allah, for supplications during prostration are almost certain to be accepted” (Reported by Imam Muslim).

I ask Allah for forgiveness

• Supplications of the prophet in prostration like :

• “O Lord, to Thee I prostrate, in Thee I believe and to Thee I submit: My face prostrates to He Who created and fashioned it and made its form good and provided it with hearing and sight,- praise be to Allah, the most excellent of creators” , “O Lord, give my soul its devoutness and purify it, for none other than Thou can purify it, Thou are its Lord and Master”.

• As you feel rest inside your heart and did enough of supplications & asked all you wish , when u get this inside feeling of security and peace …get ready to raise your head back to the sitting position.

• Raise up the head from prostration saying **"ALLAHU AKBAR"** (resting on the left foot flattened on the ground while keeping the right foot erect with the toes of the right foot firmed on the ground).

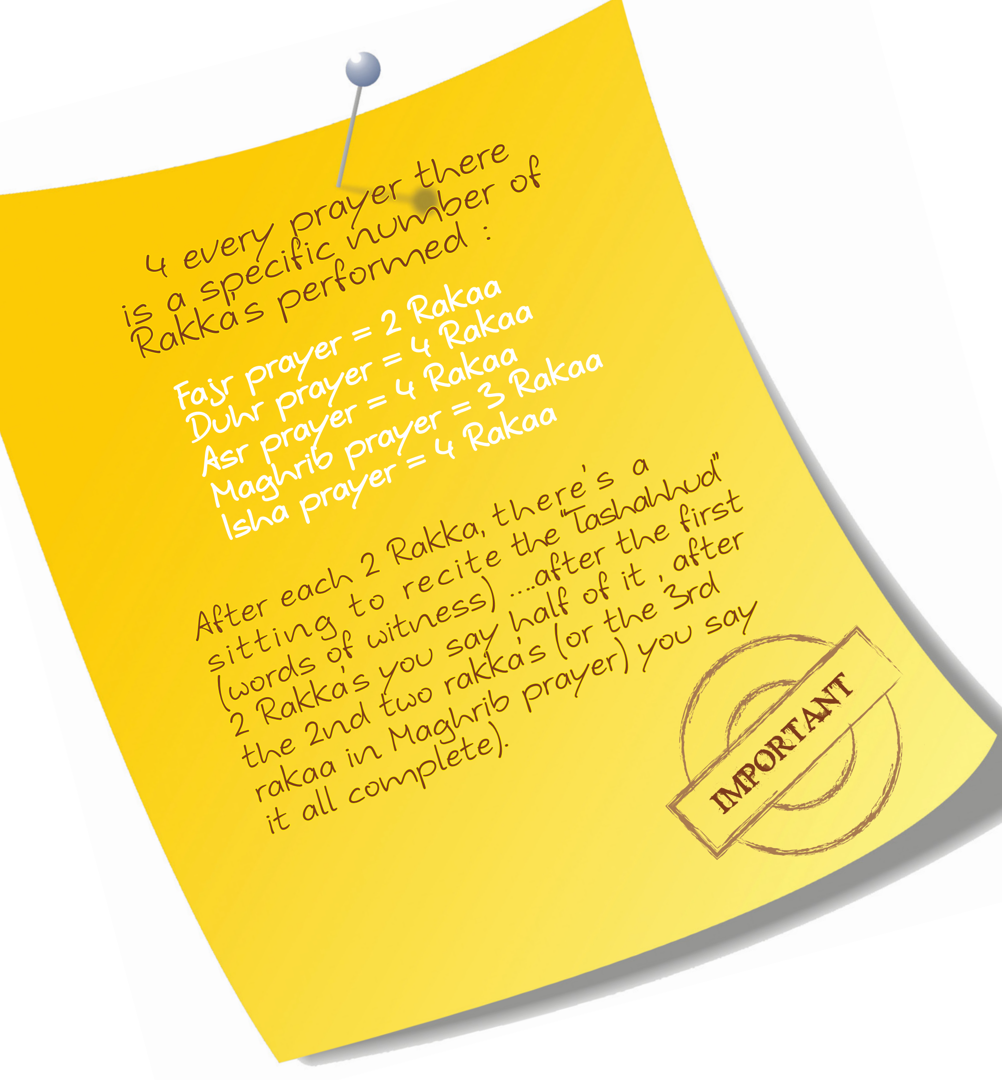
• It's advisable to say a supplication here like this prophetic one: " O my Lord, forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, console me, provide for me, and heal me".

• As u take enough time proceed to the 2nd prostration . Saying "ALLAHU-AKBAR" and repeating what was done inthe first prostration.

• Raise your head again and take a moment in sitting , here you finished a single unit of the prayer (Rakaa) .and by standing and saying (Allahu Akbar) you start again another one the same as step 7 down to here) .







Tashahhud

At Tahiyyatu Lilahi Wasalawatu Watayyibat uassalamu Alayka Ayuhan-Nabiyu Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu Asalamu Alayna Wa Ala Ibadi-L-Lahi-S-Salihiyn. Ash-Hadu Anla Ilaha Ila Lahu Wahdahu La Shari-ka Lahu Wa Ash-Haduanna Muhammadan Abduhu Wa Rasuuluh.*** Allahumma Salliy Ala Muhammad Wa Ala Aali - Mu-hammad, Kama Salayta Ala Ibra-hima, Wa Aala Aali Ibrahim. Inaka Hamidon Majid. Wa Barik Alaa Muhammad Wa Alaa Aali Muham-mad Kama Barakta Ala Ibrahima Wa Alaa Aali Ibrahim, Inaka Hami-don Majid " .



• "Greetings, prayers and our good deeds are for Allah. Peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be on you O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the de-vout servants of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah ….

• (When reciting this part point out the index finger of the right hand as a sign of monotheistic belief)…..and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.*** O Lord, bless Mu-hammad and his family as You blessed Abraham and his family. You are the Most-Praised, The Most Glorious. O Lord, bestow Your grace on Muham-mad and his family as You bestowed it on Abraham and his family. You are the Most-Praised, the Most- Glorious".

(***here ends half of Tashahhud)

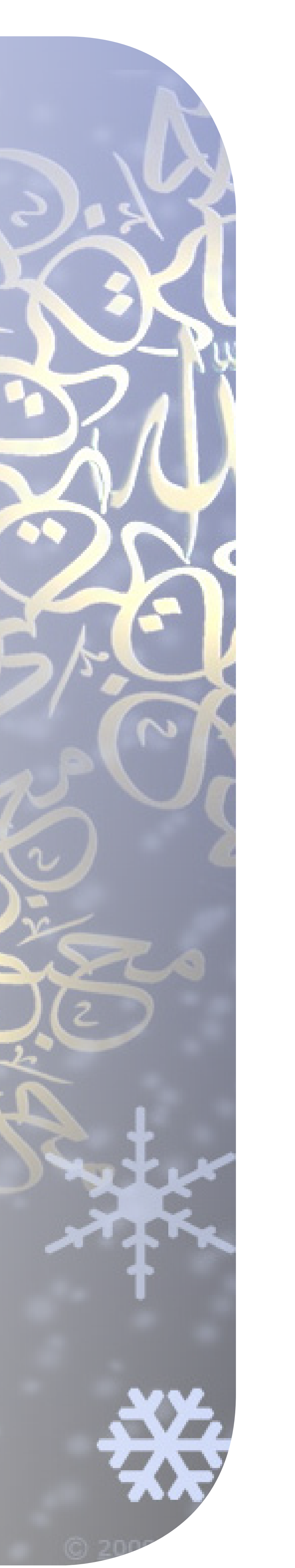


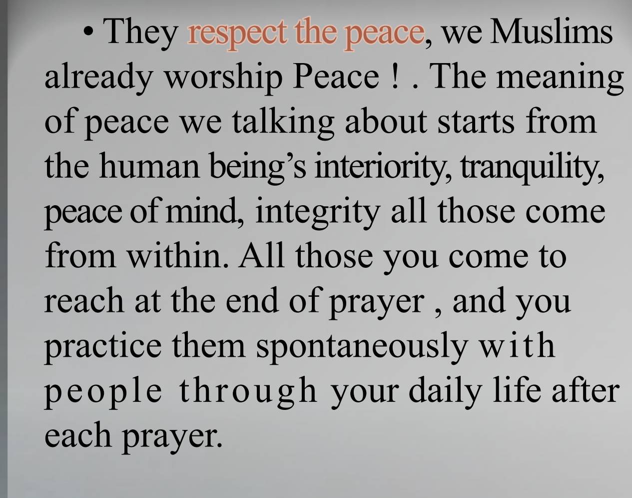
• It is recommended to add to the above reading the following supplication in which the person asks for Allah's protection from four evils: "My Lord, I seek Your protection from the torment of Hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trials in lifetime and after death, and from the impostor Masihid-dajaal".

• Having completed the At-Tashahhud the Muslim terminates the prayer by saying : "AS-SALAMU ALEYKUM WA RAHMATU-LAAH", which means : " Peace and mercy of Allah be upon you", turning the face first to the right and then, to the left saying the same phrase again.

• In the end, you proved that you sent the Messenger of God your greetings as well as all the good people of the mankind, you are in the presence of Him in prayer addressing the One God glory to Him ,who gave you the knowledge of "how to reach Him" and the honor to do so in the first place .

• Ending your prayers with peace to feel that you have come from the presence of Peace (one of almighty God names) , teach the world that peace is not just words to say in conferences or media, no matter how long they just keep speaking about peace today, they wont know peace and it wont be received like that, for peace is not about you, peace is one of the names of God .. and we need to know God first to find that peace.

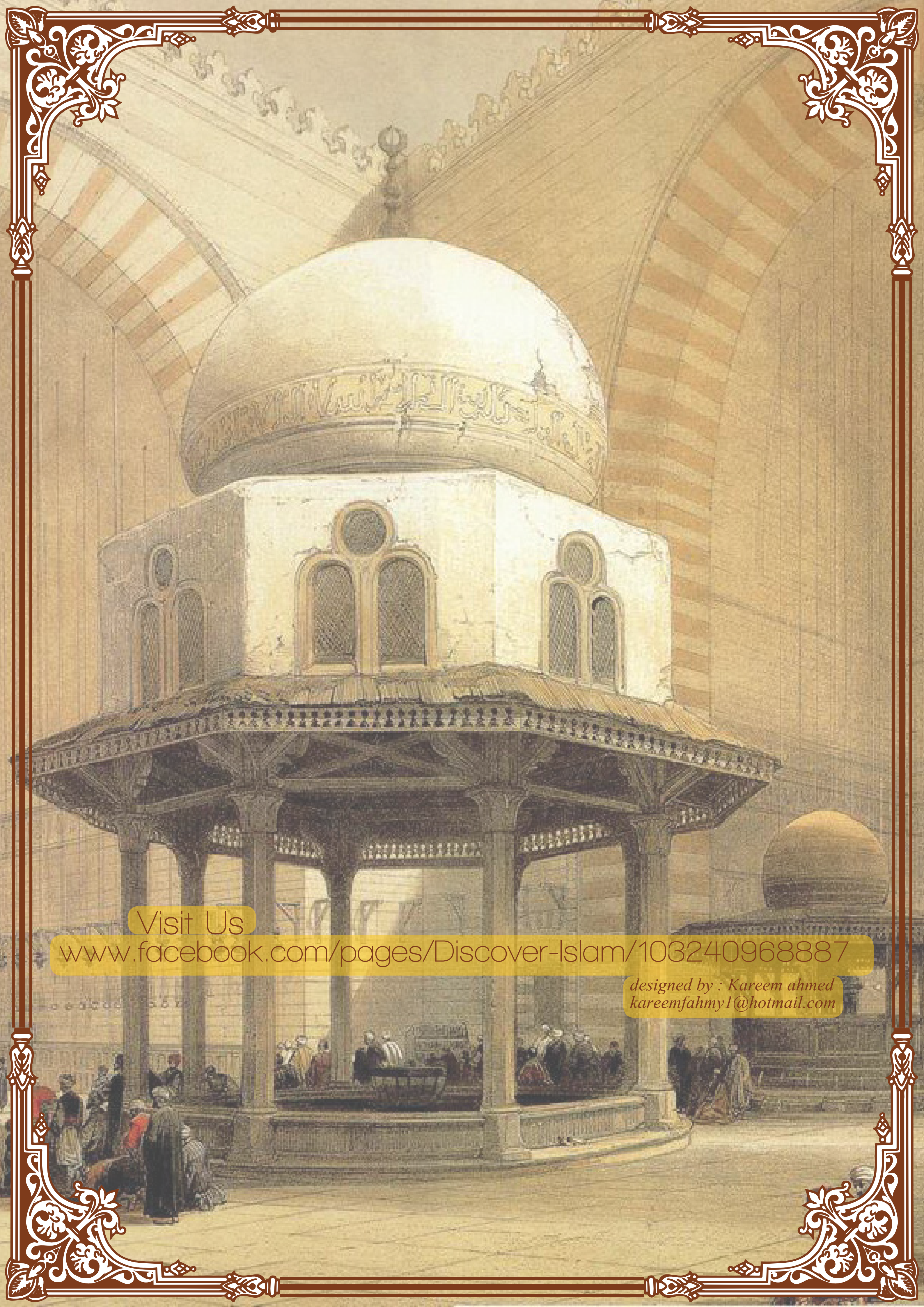




• They respect the peace, we Muslims already worship Peace ! . The meaning of peace we talking about starts from the human being's interiority, tranquility, peace of mind, integrity all those come from within. All those you come to reach at the end of prayer , and you practice them spontaneously with people through your daily life after each prayer.

• Muslims learn to salute with "salam" means "peace" and end our prayers with the same! Even if there's no one to hear such words (after prayer)…you do it to address the universes that surround you, then you salute the entire universe through your presence with the Creator of the universe Almighty.

• Finally, we ask God : help us to remember You, thank You and worship You, O Allah, and peace upon our Imam the Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, and our final prayer is to thank God lord of the worlds.


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